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A Spray of Cosmos

POEMS BY

Augusta Cooper Bristol

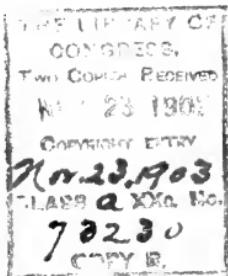
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THE ALL-PERVADING GOD

I walked with Nature alone one day,
And sought to discern the sound,
That murmured up from the growing shrub
And leafy tongues around,
The field-bell opened her yellow hood,
To let me look in her eye,
And the king-cups lifted their heads to bow,
Whenever I sauntered by ;
The faintest noise of a sighing breath
From the heart of the rose came up,
And I bent my ear to the musical hum
In the blue-bells tiny cup ;
And clustered violets, faint and dim,
Were stooping so near the sod,
That I knew by the daisy's tearful eye,
They whispered together of God.

I walked in the woodland's solemn shade,
Where gums and dew-drops drip ;
Where mosses embrace the dead old trees,
And kiss with a clinging lip ;
The brave old oak, — the monarch oak,
Swung forward his giant arm,
And the infant trees at his gesture wide,
Waved shivering with alarm ;
They knew, perhaps, that a mighty theme
Their forest king had stirred ;
And stiff and solemn the hemlocks stood,
As if they too had heard ;
The tasselled pine, with a trembling moan,
Reeled forward and back in the air,
And threw her quivering fingers up

To the sky, as if in prayer ;
Then my quick ear oped to the strange refrair.
Around the path I trod,
And I caught a note ere it closed again ;
And the word I heard was, "God. "

I tarried for rest in a valley cool,
Where fluttered the wayward gale ;
And out from the dark green thicket's shade,
Came down the wind-god's wail ;
The breeze died sobbing upon my brow,
Then started to life again,
And hurried away to the shrieking hills,
To groan with a secret pain ;
It shouted hoarse to the mountains old,
And the mountains answered back ;
But the song grew sweetly low and mild,
As it neared the valley's track ;
Then it came like an angel's breath to me,
And fainting down to the sod,
It sighed a hymn on the clover's neck,
But all that I heard was "God. "

I walked by the sea, — the tinted sea,
Where the ships go sailing by :
The calm old ocean lay on his back,
To smile in the face of the sky :
But a sound came up from the caves low down,
And he trembled all over with joy,
And shook and danced, that old gray sea,
As though he were only a boy ;
He hurried past the beautiful isles,
And tost like a bubble the ships,
In his haste to kiss the virgin beach

With his blue and foaming lips ;
Then the storm arose, and with blackened wings,
Hung brooding over the main,
Till the wakened sea — the monster sea,
I could hear him wild complain :
Then they joined in one — the dark-winged storm,
And the sea with terrible roar ;
And the white-haired waves, grown gray in an hour,
Fell swooning back to the shore ;
But the cloudy monarch was blanched with dread,
And quailed at the ocean's frown,
So slowly lifting his wide wings up,
With tear-drops glittering down,
He floated away, with a sweet sad voice,
To the orange sun in the west,
While ocean lay with a murmur down,
On his jewelled floor to rest ;
Then a still small voice, from the coral hall,
Where the sea-nymph's feet had trod,
Trembled up through the dimpling violet wave,
And chanted to me of God.

I watched the Night, in her dark gray barge,
When the world was fast asleep,
Sail proudly up from the lonely East,
Across heaven's glittering deep ;
The moon was pushing the clouds aside,
From her beautiful brilliant way,
And the stars were blinking and shining out,
As though for a mere display ;
But the queenly Night, — the saintly Night,
With her gracious, majestic brow !
The stars were forming a magical word,
On the front of her gloomy prow.

But distant and far as that gray barge was,
From my seat on the mossy sod,
I could dimly trace the characters there,
And the word that I spelled was "God."

The pass-word of all created things,
Was this I had heard and read,
From the tiniest blossom on Earth's green vest,
To the throbbing stars o'erhead.
Then I closed my eyes to the outer world,
And silently gazed within,
To the heart's dim cells, where the lamp of love
Burned low in a fog of sin ;
Then I bent me down in a loved surprise,
Till my forehead touched the sod ;
For the harpers of Truth in the human heart,
Were chanting to me of God.

ENTITIES

The poet's spirit pours no more the olden time libation ;
The ancient wine no longer fires the sweetness of his strain ;
The perfume cup and censer, with the mystical oblation,
Were shivered by the agony that rent the veil in twain.

Last night, at sunset hour I stood, and smiled upon the daring
Of a bird that sprinkled music into golden silences :
And through the royal splendor that the universe
was wearing,

My spirit-vision caught a glimpse of sacred entities.

There was no flaming chariot for laurel-crowned
Apollo,
Where amber plumes of sunset spread serenely in
the West;
But cherub wings were floating over cloud-ravine
and hollow,
Beyond the purple fringes upon Nature's glory-vest.

And in the eastern sky, no gods upon their ether
pillows,
Received the fragrant nectar from the Hebe of their
court,
But earthward bound, and undulating over cloudy
billows,
The angels in their pearly boats came rocking into
port.

I turned toward the forest where the glossy oak
leaves shimmered,
And regal tops were glowing in the farewell of the
sun;
Yet down the woodland path no foot of gleaming
Dryad glimmered,
With white embossed upon the gloom where early
shadows run.

But brooding in the presence of an all-surpassing
Beauty,
The infant boughs were whispering a sacred epi-
logue;
And sweet and holy subtleties of love, and faith, and
duty,

Thrilled into gurgling silver through a blue-bird
mystagogue.

I sought the ocean cliff, and heard the little tide-waves kissing
The rough and rocky shoulder Earth had leaned
against the Sea ;
But Neptune, and the coursers with the golden
manes were missing,
And the triple pointed sceptre of the water deity.

No nereids were grouping in the soft rose-tinted
water,
In silent wonder smiling o'er the secrets of their
home ;
No breathing zephyr wafted the old Sea's divinest
daughter,
For Aphrodite rose not in her drapery of foam.

But suddenly the wide expanse seemed gloriously
clearer ;
A gleam of light celestial with the crimson shadows
played ;
And precious feet upon the deep came nearer and
yet nearer,
And soft the caverns echoed, "It is I, be not
afraid."

O purple drops of Calvary, that cleansed the spirit
vision !
O love-revealing link between the human and divine !
Through thee the poet evermore walks in a world
elysian,
And life becomes a sanctity, and earth a sacred
shrine.

SPIRIT HUNGER

Come to me, angels ! The room of my spirit
Is garnished and swept for a season by prayer ;
I have cast out, just to win you anear it,
All the earth vanities brooding in there :

Come to me angels !

Lift for a moment my curtain of care !

I am so weary of earthly supineness —
Life that is levelled to labor and pay !
I am so hungry for Nature's divineness
Hungry to talk with her only a day :

Come to me angels !

Write in my heart the sweet words she would say.

I will not ask that your presence may bring me
Glimpses of Heaven ; — my soul-reaches are low
I am not worthy your white lips should sing me
One of the songs that the seraphim know :

Come to me angels !

Teach me God's precious revealments below.

Bear on your wings, in your coming and going,
Wafts of His breathing o'er prairie and lea !
Bring me sweet hints, from the May roses blowing
Of Deity's thought sprung to bloom on a tree

Come to me angels !

Tell what the roses are keeping for me !

Open to me by a sacred impressment,
Mysteries hid in a gurgle of song !
Secrets enfolded in purple caressment,
Close in the tubes where the honey-bees throng

Come to me angels !
Bearing that bird and bee message along !

Often I think by the scintillant gesture
Of sunbeam and cloud, that the theme of the sky,
Is only pale splendor of Deity's vesture,
With glory reduced to Mortality's eye :

Come to me angels,
So I may know if my thought is a lie !

Always I fancy the spirit's ideal —
The beauty and light we forever pursue,
Is witness within us of One who is real ; —
God faintly miraged to Humanity's view.

Come to me angels !
Float in and whisper my fancy is true !

A SUMMER MORNING HOUR WITH NATURE

The Night has gathered up her moonlit fringes
And curtains gray,
And orient gates, that turn on silver hinges,
Let in the Day.

The morning sun his golden eye-lash raises
O'er eastern hills ;
The happy summer bird, with matin praises
The thicket fills.

And Nature's dress, with softly tinted roses
And lilies wrought,
Through all its varied unity discloses
God's perfect thought.

Sweet Nature ! hand in hand with her I travel
Adown the mead,
And half her precious mysteries unravel,
Her scripture read.

And while the soft wind lifts her tinted pages,
And turns them o'er,
My heart goes back to one in by-gone ages
Who loved her lore,

And symbols used, of harvest field and fountain,
And breezy air ;
Who sought the sacred silence of the mountain
For secret prayer.

Oh drop, my soul, the burden that oppresses,
The cares that rule,
That I may prove the whispering wildernesses,
Heaven's vestibule !

For I can hear, despite material warden
And earthly locks,
A still, small voice,—and know that through his
garden
The Father walks.

The fragrant lips of dewy flowers that glisten
Along the sward,
Are whispering to my spirit as I listen,
“ It is the Lord ! ”

And forest monarchs tell by reverent gesture
And solemn sigh,
That the veiled splendor of his awful vesture
Is passing by.

The billows witness Him. No more they darkle,
But leap to lave
The silent marching feet that leave a sparkle
Along the wave.

And sweet aromas, fresher and intenser,
The gales refine ;
The odor floating from the lily's censer,
Is breath divine.

Nature — Heaven's priestess — yieldeth precious
witness
And large reply,
To him who comes to her with inward fitness
Of harmony.

Who seeks her door with calm interrogation,
And reverent knock,
With motive pure, and chaste communication, —
She will not mock.

But open wide her penetralia portal,
And bid her guest
Drink from the precious streams of truth immortal
That vein her breast.

WHAT DOES THE SEA SAY ?

The Sea, to me, is a mystery
That wraps me in its spell ;
And what the wild old Ocean says,
Who shall divine, or tell ?

I met a bright-haired boy to-day,
While strolling on the strand,—
A sweet-faced child, who gently led
An old man by the hand.

And I said within, “I’ll question these,
Of the mystery of the wave;
For one so fresh from the hand of God,
And one so near the grave,

Perchance may catch some spirit word
From the notes of Earth’s alloy;—
The word that the soul of Nature speaks.”
So I turned me to the boy.

The happiest smile broke o’er his face;
“Do you see the waves at play?
Don’t you know what the gay, blue billow does?
It laughs forever and aye.”

Then I turned to the tottering man, “Pray tell
What the restless waters say?”
“Can’t you hear?” he asked, in a wondering tone,
“It murmurs and moans for aye.”

RESPONSIBILITY

Think purely, and thy thought shall aid the rose
To hold her sweetened breath, shall guaranty
The lily’s snow, shall filter rain and dew
To clearer whiteness, and shall well insure
The diamond’s light, and luster of the pearl.

Deal justly in thy every word and act,
And this — thy dealing — shall eliminate,

Slowly but sure, from out the universe,
The serpent's venom, and the insect's sting,
The earthquake's mumbling threat, the direful sweep
Of the tornado's wing, and all the dread
Perturbation of the star-feet overhead,
Slow deviant from their orbed rectitude.

Live nobly, and the haughty mountain peaks
Shall yield acknowledgement, shall slow relax
Their ancient caste, and lower their proud heads,
In wider reachings stretch their granite arms,
And fraternise in broader unities;
The valleys shall arise to meet the hills,
Exultant and exalted, with no place
For echo's mockery to testify
Of barrier and division. Then take heed
O man and woman, to retain and guard
The sovereign laws of thine integrity,
Drawing the cosmic forces in the train
Of thy white royalty, and shaping thus
Thine own perfection, mould the destiny
And genius of the universe.

VOICES

Heir of an infinite privilege, with earnest zeal, I
sought
To gather the true and the beautiful to the glowing
forge of thought.

And there in the vital furnace heat, full patiently
and long,
I changed my wealth, in a human way, to deed and
simple song.

Till there came a voice from the world without —
 O very sweet with praise —

And the waft that bore it seemed the breath of
freshly woven bays.

And my soul was glad for a moment, in that little
 breeze of fame,

Though it seemed to darken the purity of the living
central flame.

But the heavens, that loved my loyalty, encompassed
me around,

Till my spirit ear was opened, and I heard the won-
drous sound

Of far majestic voices, beyond the sunset bars,
And sweet and mighty utterances between the
solemn stars.

Till, awed to a nobler faithfulness, and humbled
 very low,

I wrought again at the forge of thought since God
would have it so.

Yet, howe'er weak or imperfect the deed, and the
 rythmic song,

I crowned for aye the eternal Right, and branded
the ancient Wrong.

When lo, a voice from the world again ! and O it
 was dread with blame !

The waft that bore it like a breath from poisonous
ivy came.

And my soul sank down a moment, bewildered
with a doubt;
And the phantom of misgiving was brooding round
about.

But the heavens, that loved my loyalty, unsealed
my ear again,
And I heard the sound of voices, soft and low as
summer rain.

A voice through all the emerald spires where
meadow grasses grow :
A colloquy between the leaves where summer roses
blow.

A voice from the fairy chamber behind the sea
shell's lip,
And a whisper among the mosses where woodland
rivulets slip.

A voice from the swaying lilies among the river
reeds,
An oracle faintly sighing up from the root to the
golden seeds.

A voice that the swinging butterfly folds under its
downy wings,
And a low, miraculous murmur, from the soul of
creeping things.

And the prophecy of the joint refrain, the theme of
the tiny whole,
Was a hint of the infinite value of an earnest human
soul.

Thus, saved by the mystic murmurings, from over-pride, or shame,
I work again, in my simple way, secure from praise or blame.

And between the voices far and high, and whisperings near and low,
I live for the true and the beautiful, for God would have it so.

WHAT THE ROSES SAID

This is what the roses said —
One transcendent summer morning,
When the light clouds overhead,
Heedless of my mortal scorning,
Drank the rays of golden red :
When the wild birds solemn trill
Where the river runneth still,
Filled me with a hungry dread ;
When my life no truth could render
For the world's mistaken splendor ;
When I thought my heart was dead,
This is what the roses said.

“ Crimson leaf and pollen gold
Born of darkness and the mold
Every perfect leaf and fruitage
Rises from a grave-like rootage,
And the strong wild winds that rock us,
And the tempest storms that shock us,
And the snows upon the lea,
All are certain guaranty
Of perfection yet to be :

Of a beauty more complete
For the shadow at its feet :
Greener strength and fairer bloom,
Sweeter breathings of perfume,
Deep hearts filled with richer balm,
May-days more divinely calm,
Fairer reachings into light,
Firmer growth, and nobler height.
Light and peace, from shade and strife,
Is the paradox of life,
For one sweet, Eternal Will,
In the darkness worketh still.”

This is what the roses said,
Shaming all my foolish scorning,
That transcendent summer morning
When I thought my heart was dead.

“ THE ALL IN ALL ”

Within our lives of conscious care,
There lies another, fair and sweet ;
All gracious sanctities are there,
And trust, and consecration mete ;
A heaven that lieth not apart,
A spirit world within the heart.

And yet we grope with veiled eyes
For that which lieth near at hand ;
Or lift our prayers, with piteous cries,
Through darkness, to an unknown land,
While close beside us runs the way
That broadens to divinest day.

I looked upon the summer world,
I heard the gladness of her rills,
I saw her sunset banners furled
Upon the shoulders of the hills,
And looking — in my conscious heart
I said, “God dwelleth not apart.

“ If, in the ancient days, His feet
 Pressed fragrance from a garden walk,
And our frail mother heard His sweet
 And blessed ministry of talk,
If she e'er saw His face divine,
I hold the privilege as mine.”

“ And yet, my eyes are shadowed quite ;
 So darkened, that I can not see
To read the wondrous law aright
 That draws Him to Humanity.
If I can make an Eden place,
Perchance He will reveal His face.”

A place of blossoms, perfect fair,
 With emerald arches reaching wide ;
No common bloom shall open there,
 But heavenly beauty shall abide.
He will return to warn and bless,
Drawn by the law of perfectness.

And then, from morn till eve, I sought
 For shrub and blossom, rich and rare ;
From morn till eve, I patient wrought,
 To make my garden faultless fair :
The common flower I did uproot,
And crushed it with a careless foot.

And soon, it grew a lovely place
 Of strange and supreme loveliness,
Where fringe trees, with a mystic grace,
 Shook in their airy vapor dress,
And the magnolia's waxen bloom,
 Through glossy thickets, breathed perfume.

And near the fountain's circling line,
 The rich rose spread her leaves apart,
And dropt her bosom's amber wine
 Into the lily's open heart ;
And the azalea's pink and snow
 Gave the green light a sunset glow.

Yet all in vain the thicket's shade,
 The fount, and groves of blooming flame,
For He whose presence I essayed
 With yearnings deep — He never came.
In vain I walked that perfect spot,
 For if He came, I knew it not.

Then, in a frantic ecstasy
 That would not be o'er-borne, I cried,
“ I can not win the heavens to me,
 Though all perfection here abide !
And since I can not reach so high,
 I will my own heart satisfy.

“ The little field flowers shall find grace
 Within my sight ; I will not pass
The meadow blossom, but give place
 To common blooms of common grass.
I can not draw the Lord above,
 I'll make a place for human love. ”

And in the gladness of the thought,
I sought the azure violet,
And buttercups and daisies brought,
And in the garden border set
The crowfoot, and the gentian too,
And forest harebells softly blue.

When lo ! A sudden glory fell
About me, touching all with grace :
For Love — with magic charm and spell,
Had found me working at my place,
And dropt into my heart the key
That ope'd the higher life to me.

And from my vision fled away
The dark'ning shadows, and I saw
The rose tree, and the thistle spray,
Evolving by divinest law ;
Divinest life and essence ran
From atom-dust to conscious Man.

One law of life was everywhere,
From starry sphere to blossom seed ;
It moved the sea, it filled the air
With vital breath, and I could read
Eternal Scripture on the stone,
And I no longer walked alone.

LOSS AND GAIN

Oh, Nature is gracious and kind to me
I cannot inhale her life divine,
Or take her spirit into mine,
Because of the babe upon my knee.

I cannot behold her breast a-flush
And gay with the red bud's blossom crown,
The while she donneth her April gown,
In a budding silence, — blush by blush.

And later, I shall not stand and see
Her beauty evolve on the sunny slope,
Where the honied mouths of the roses ope
To the butterfly and humble-bee.

And when the Summer, with softest air,
Shall woo the lilies to rock and ride
In the arms of the strong and wonderful tide,
And wavelets dance, I shall not be there.

Though my heart for the balmy woodland yearns,
I cannot list, with enchanted ear,
The wild dove's moan, or smile to hear
The brooklet talk to the fairy ferns.

The orange waves of the sunset sea,
And morning lifting a brow of gold
From airy coverlets, — fold on fold
Of rose and silver, — are lost to me.

Yet Nature and I are faithful friends,
Wedded forever. She wreathes my cross
With leaf and bud, and for all my loss
And hindrance, she maketh full amends.

For lo, the beauty of air and sea,
The music-gurgle of woodland springs,
The grace of brilliant and airy things,
Wrought into the babe upon my knee !

I mark the light of the lily's snow,
On dimpled shoulder and glossy arm,
And on his cheek the varying charm
Of flowery tintings come and go.

And sunset bathes with palest gold
His shining hair, and the solemn skies,
Have wrought in his violet-shaded eyes,
Their starry settings manifold.

The delicate hues of the ocean-shell
Flow into his fairy finger-tips,
And behind the fold of his blossom lips,
The pearls are coming, I know full well.

¶
And in his cooings, there mingles so
The music of bird and brook refrain,
All fashioned into a mystic strain,
And words which only the angels know.

And thus I have not been dispossess
By Nature. I hold in a better way
Her rich bequeathings ; for night and day
I nurse her glory upon my breast.

But this my wealth : — I have more of Thee,
God and Father ! for half divine
Is the little life entwined with mine, —
The baby that sits upon my knee.

LIFE'S DAY

MORNING

“ O happy bee, linger with me in the clover !
For Day is only begun ;
Just wait till the bluebell unclasps her cover,
And learn how the secret is done.
There's time both for labor and play, little rover,
'Tis long to the setting of sun.

“ I laugh pretty Rose — for I think it is funny
That such a sweet bud of May,
Will neither reveal, for the love nor the money,
The secret she foldeth away.
But you'll open your heart to me down to its honey,
Before it is noon of the Day.

“ You lock up your riddle, and will not confess it
Though buttercups drop you gold ;
It may be the gay bobolink will express it :—
He sings what has never been told.
He may tangle his song, but I think I shall guess it
Before the morning is old.

“ O dark ribbon river ! O low singing river !
I'll run with you to the sea,
For you have a mystery, too, to deliver :
I wonder what it can be !
The dew-dropping ferns on the marge are a-quiver
With longing to tell it to me.

“ 'Tis needless to chide with your ripple and singing
I'm old enough to be brave ;

I'll run to the shore, where the glad sea is bringing
Some wonder in with the wave :
The billows are leaping, and there is a ringing
Of laughter in every cave.

" You linger too long, pretty stream, by the willow ;
You loiter by mead and lea :
There's a shell with a purple lip, down by the billow,
All filled with a murmur for me.
Or ever I lie down to sleep on my pillow,
I'll learn that song of the Sea.

" But the earth is so bright, I'll enjoy it at leisure,
For Day is only begun ; —
I wish it were noon, — I would have so much treas
ure !
There's not much work to be done :
There is plenty of time, both for labor and pleasure :
'Tis long to the setting of sun."

NOON

O THE sweetness of the morning,
And the fleetness of the morning !
A wave of light and laughter,
And the sultry noon is here !
All the rapture and the beauty
Is transmuted into duty,
And Life's patient angel singeth
" Persevere ! Persevere ! "

Hath Nature then bereft me ?
Hath she won my love and left me ?
Did she mock me with a splendor

That has faded from the view ?
As the child-heart getteth older
Is the Heaven-Heart only colder ?
Is there loss, with no replacement
That is more divinely true ?

Nay, nay ! I keep the morning,
All the freshness and adorning,
The beauty and the radiance,
The crimson and the gold,
In the precious human treasure
Which the heart alone can measure,
In the purities and graces
Which my mother-arms enfold.

I hold the Dawn's completeness,
In mouths of rosy sweetness,
In locks that snare the sunbeams,
In eyes of April blue.
O Heaven is ever gracious,
And though heart be e'er so spacious,
God feeds its yearning vastness
With a glory, grand and true.

While yet the noon-tide lingers,
O oft essaying fingers,
Amend thy poor achievement
In this garden of the Lord !
Hand, quicken in thy doing !
Feet, haste in thy pursuing !
Life's chivalry is labor,
And action is reward.

'Tis the scripture that the blossom
Hath unfolded from her bosom,
The wild bee ever hummeth it
 The clover blooms among ;
It is what the roses brought me,
And the vanished morning taught me,
This sweetly tangled meaning,
 Bird-wrought into a song.

The rose still faintly bloweth,
And her honey balm bestoweth,
 And wide the ribbon river
 Floweth downward to the mere ;
And Life is Nature's beauty
Sublimed to earnest duty,
 And clear the angel singeth
 " Persevere ! Persevere ! "

EVENING

I FAIN would rest, while through the sunset arches,
 The evening shade
Falls softly on the many weary marches
 That I have made.

Yet, as the tide wave unto orb'd forces
 Rolls ever on,
So by the Love that shapes our human courses
 My steps are drawn.

Oh I was in an ecstasy of wonder,
 When morning came,
With all the heaven of purple earth lay under
 And golden flame.

And yet I murmured not that primal beauty
Should vanish soon,
But welcomed the sublimer birth of duty
That came with noon.

And now — soul-trustful in the meanings taught me
Of shade and light,
I thank Thee, Father, that Thy love hath brought
me
To see the night.

Into the folded wonder of a blossom
I looked at dawn,
And on the star-bright velvet of its bosom
God's name was drawn.

And on the rose leaf's veined interlacing,
On wing of bird,
On crystal sea and sky, I spelled the tracing,
The ONE GREAT WORD.

And later — when the gloriole of beauty
Had fled the noon,
And Love had set the trumpet notes of duty
To perfect tune,

When Life was one with faith, and earnest labor
Was one with prayer,
And the tried soul had learned to bravely neighbor
With vexing care,

I joyed to find the NAME had yet a nearer
And dearer part
In life, than Nature ; — graven full and clearer

Upon the heart.

And when the way grew terrible with torrent,
 And tempest gleam,
Then brighter shone that universal warrant
 Of Love Supreme.

And Night's dread glory — calmly comprehended —
 Is still the same ; —
The awful order of the heavens suspended,
 Reveals the NAME.

O Grand Impress ! proclaiming earth and Nature
 A sacred shrine,
And yielding science the majestic stature
 Of Truth Divine !

Life is not then defeat, but triumph rather ;
 Not poor or small,
But infinitely rich, since thou, my Father,
 Art " All in All. "

Then pass in peace my soul. Though earth re-
cedeth,
 Heaven orbs the way,
And the starred shadow of the night precedeth
 Life's larger day.

“THE OLD, OLD STORY”

WITH VARIATIONS

“ THE OLD, OLD STORY”

Love—a wakened bird is singing,
Singing in the early dawn;
Singing that the day is coming,
Singing that the night is gone ;
And my heart sends back responses
To the bird upon the lawn.

Love—the while I lie and listen,
Am I right or am I wrong,
That two melodies seem ringing
Like a song within a song ?—
One informing all the other
With its meanings deep and strong.

Love—no bird in wood or meadow
Ever sang like this before ;
Am I foolish, am I sinful,
That I listen and adore ?
That my life’s awakened music
Moves responsive, more and more ?

LOVE-WORSHIP

I have seen a brow, as purely bright,
As the snow just tinted with rosy light;
Set round with locks of the softest brown,
And gay with the splendor of Beauty's crown.
But more than this, I discovered there,
Close in the shade of that beautiful hair,
That Genius, with touch unseen and light,
Had shaped and modelled the forehead white ;
And my soul knelt down, when that brow passed by,
In a service of love, I knew not why.
Who'll dare to blame me for worshiping so,
Or chide my spirit? Not God, I know.

I have seen a pair of beautiful eyes,
With a tender change like April skies ;
Mildly radiant, deeply blue,
With the star of Love, just shining through :
And I saw a glimpse of the soul divine
Start out of those depths of shade and shine,
And my unchecked spirit reached to grasp
That new found soul, with confiding clasp.
Oh, in all the world there were no such eyes,
To reveal the heaven where purity lies !
Who'll dare to blame me for thinking so,
Or chide my spirit! Not God, I know.

I have seen a strangely bewitching mouth,
With the glowing warmth of the tropic South :—
A gleam of pearl in a fold of rose,
Where the breath in balmy fragrance flows ;
Where dimples hurry from lip to cheek,
In a roguish game of hide and seek.

Sometimes, I have almost dared to think,
Sweet thoughts would thicken about Love's brink
And slip those lips, in the dearest word
That my waiting soul has ever heard.
Who'll dare to blame me for hoping so,
Or chide my spirit? Not God, I know.

SPIRIT-LOVE

'Twas a secret to all that I loved him ;
I folded it close in my heart—
In the leaves of my blossoming heart—
And it seemed to those blood-beating petals
The nourishing, life-giving part ;
And I said "There is nobody knows
What is hid in the cup of my rose—
What a drop of sweet dew
Is concealed from the view
Of all eyes, in my pulse-throbbing rose."

But I never had thought of the angels—
That they could look into my soul,
And read every page of my soul :
Their clear eyes discovered the treasure ;
The life-giving secret they stole ;
Then they envied me what was so dear ;
And they charmed him away who was dear
So the crimson heart-rose
That began to unclose
Its beauty, is blighted and sere.

But the spirit of him that I worshipped
Is stronger and kinder than they ;
The angels that charmed him away—

For he comes through the star-lighted darkness,
About my lone pillow to stay :
And the moon, peering into my room,
Lighting up the mysterious gloom,
Looks frightened and pale
Through her thin silver veil
As though she shone into a tomb.

I know not if, waking or sleeping,
My soul is enwrapt in a dream—
In a mystical vision or dream—
When the Night watches me like a mother,
And the wan stars fitfully gleam ;
For there rises a shadowy host—
A wavering, shadowy host—
And they sway to and fro
Near a river's deep flow,
On the shores of a shade-haunted coast.

There is one I can tell from all others,
By the clear, tender glance of his eyes—
The mild, melting blue of his eyes—
There is no earthly tint like the color ;
It only is matched by the skies ;
And he wanders apart from the rest,
And he folds me so close to his breast !
Can an angel attain
The place that I gain—
That coveted pillow—his breast ?

Then he puts his lip down to my forehead,
Yet never can leave me a kiss ;
Oh, could he once leave me a kiss,
The saints in the gold-streeted city

Ne'er claimed such a moment of bliss !
But he lifts up a radiant wing—
An eagerly quivering wing—
And he floats from my gaze
In a circle of rays,
Like a crystal gem set in a ring.

And I joy that the soul-reading angels
Cannot always lure him from me,
Nor hold him from coming to me ;
For when the Night sits like a mother,
And hushes the wail of the sea,
And quiets the land with her power,
Ah, that is the time and the hour,
When he comes to unclose
My withered heart-rose,
And it opens a beautiful flower.

THY KISS

Friend of my soul : —I know this hand of mine
Will seek a nobler mission from this hour :
Will smooth the aching brow with softer touch,
Will bind the wound, and lead the faltering,
Will grasp the present burden, nor delay,
And firmly carve God's name in duteous deeds :
All this—I know my woman hand will do,
Since thou hast sanctified it with thy kiss.

Friend of my soul : —I know these lips of mine
Will move hereafter with a sweeter song,
Will choose the highest word of hope and faith
For Life's neglected and forsaken ones,
Will testify the evil and the good,

And wake the trumpet prophecies of truth :
All this—because love's sweet baptismal fire,—
Thy kiss,—hath touched them to diviner life.

MY SENTINEL

'Neath the trees that border the great highway,
My Sentinel passes, day by day ;
And he seems such a symbol of power to me,
Such a type of Nature, firm and free,
That I pause, as I drive by the great highway,
Pause—with never a word to say ;
For I cannot pass him, he knows full well,
My regal, masterful Sentinel.

I cannot pass, though the way is wide ;
I may not pass him whate'er betide :
I cannot pass, for the courtly grace,
The infinite blessing of form and face,
Enthrall me there ; and my soul must wait
In homage, before its Master-Fate,
Till he graciously smiles :—for he knows full well
That he is my heart's true Sentinel—
The man I have placed on guard, to hold
Its secret treasures manifold.

Guard them well, O Sentinel mine,
From those who would make me less than thine ;
From those I have held at the outer gate,
Till the years should bring me the Master-Fate,
Who, just by the strength of his royal soul,
Could storm the castle, and win the whole.

CONFIDENCE

Mine, as the blossom is mine, which opes
In wonderful bloom by the great highway,
Or buds and blushes on orient slopes
Where honey-gatherers hum all day ;
Love's free miracle opens there,
Born of the sun and the summer air.

Though others its beauty and bloom invade,
It can not disturb my strength and calm ;
Though they lie all day in its low sweet shade,
And press its cheek of odorous balm,
I am not robbed of a single part,
For the blossom is mine to its golden heart.

Mine, as the mountain bird is mine,
When it lifts its wing for an onward flight,
And over the valley's emerald line
It bears away to a craggy height,
Because I love it, I can not bear
To fetter the strength that cleaves the air.

A bird with an eye to meet the sun,
A bird with pinions that sweep the skies,
Should it fold its wings until day is done,
To perch by me,—I should lose my prize :
Though it soar all day in the clear sunshine,
I fear no loss, for the bird is mine.

Mine, as the billow is mine, that leaps
To furrow the beach of shining sand,
Or with kissing blue lips softly creeps
To the silver feet of the waiting strand,

Or flings its spray to the rocks above,
Strong and true as the heart of love.

It will swing across the wonderful sea,
It will break in pearls at another's feet,
But I know it will surely come back to me,
With the ocean-soul in its passionate beat,
And when it comes, there will not be missed
A drop of its liquid amethyst.

Mine, as the rapture of Heaven is mine,
Because of the generous overflow,
Which runneth forever, without decline,
From the heart of God to the world below,
And the Over-Life can never be less
For its all embracing tenderness.

As human thought, though narrow and small,
Is drawn at last to the large and free,
As the beauty and strength that ennobles all
Can never be less, but more to me,
As the soul is heir to a joy divine,
So beloved, thy life is mine.

MY HEAD AND HEART

I'm weary of the strife between
My head and heart ;
Each struggles for the sovereign sway,
Yet only one can I obey,
For, serve and follow which I may,
They lead apart.

"Heed me," cries heart, "nor once from my
Instructions swerve!
'T is not as precious to be free
And homeless, as to stay by me,
And braid love's blessed garland! Be
Content to serve!"

But head, all regal, pleads her right
Legitimate:
"Soul, follow me! Take on thy wings,
And thou shalt learn divinest things
From all that Nature says and sings!
Live to create!"

Then heart puts in again her sweet
Persuasive tone:
"I, only I, to life can add,
Touches that thrill and tones that glad;—
Love's warmth!—A woman's soul is sad
To be alone."

But head with voice of calm command
Still argues fair,
That wisdom's glance illuminate,
And spirit quickenings inspirate,
For human love shall compensate,
And make repair.

Thus, listening to each in turn,
My life wears on;
Oh could I only once arise,
Yet hold love's sweetness in my eyes,
The while I soar and sweep the skies,
And join the dawn!

Oh for a friend exceptional
And heavenly great !
That, worshipping creative mind,—
The immortal thought, illumed, refined,—
Will keep the heart's dear gifts enshrined,
Inviolate !

Oh for a king with power to hold
Miraculous reign !
To let my fond heart have her way,
And reverence her passion play,
Yet not one single fetter lay
Upon the brain !

Come Death, and harmonize the powers
That draw apart !
From God's almighty obtain
A compromise between the twain,
And satisfy my hungry brain
And yearning heart !

“ WAIT FOR ME ”

Aye, I will wait !
Though years are dread with length, and time is drear,
Across the purple darkness of the Sea
A single sunbeam falls, divinely clear,
Painting its one bright rainbow all for me :
And I—who never yet complained of Fate,
Will bravely wait.

And thou wilt wait.
Over Life's surging ocean, dim and wide,
Thou hast sent out the promise, and behold

The starry lilies crown the rising tide,
And white swans float upon the liquid gold,
And soft winds blow toward the Sunset gate ;
For thou wilt wait.

Heaven bids me wait !
The angel of my dreams—who floods my sleep
With beauty, until Night the Day transcends,
And from whose soul-embrace I wake to weep
Refreshing tears,—he also nobly bends
From the dread glory of his angel state,
And bids me wait.

Then—if I wait—
The martyr's highest courage be thy grace !
A Saint's endeavor to thy soul be given !
For thou must meet that angel, face to face,
And well contest the older claims of Heaven,
And hold high tournament before the gate,
If I should wait.

Why should I wait ?
The hunger of thy soul is infinite ;
The latest birth of beauty, near or far,
Thou drawest, till thou walkest in the light,
Like a god stepping on from star to star :
Love's changeful universe is thy estate,
Why should I wait ?

Though I should wait,
I could not, would not, keep thee for an hour,
Or hold thee from thy upward lengthening track :
Drawn ever on by some new seraph power,
Thy dear dark eyes would never once look back,

And I—oh I would be Heaven desolate,
Who dared to wait.

MY HEART'S MISTAKE

I bravely thought to prove within myself,
Law was the servant, not the vital law
Of my life's purpose ;—the sweet incident,
That the wide sweeping current of my will
Must sometimes overbear, and hold submerged
'Neath the full freighted tumult of my thought.
As tendril life below the sea-wave's strength.
So did my heart soliloquize in song,
And under monotones of Saxon strength
Hold down its Attic fervor.

“A glory crowns my life” I said,
“A starry charm in two dark eyes
That opened·under Orient skies,
And brightens all the path I tread.

“ But should their brightness turn aside,
And glory still is left to me,
For opal lights are on the sea,
And stars are out at eventide.

“ And in the golden clasp of Morn,
The Day awakens evermore,
And if I wait at Nature's^sdoor—
Dark eyes !—I shall not be forlorn.”

“ There is a voice ” (my heart sang on)
“ That gathers into limpid speech
The tidal music of the beach,
And faint bird-hintings of the Dawn.

“ While through its silver ebb and flow,
Its sweetly modulated round
Of love—there seems to come and go,
A muffled majesty of sound,

“ As if a god’s heroic will
Lived latent in that sweet refrain :
Yet—should I hear thee not again,
Rare voice !—there will be music still.

“ For gaily, from the oaken spray,
The wild bird carols to the Morn,
And through the flags of rustling corn
The happy summer breezes play.

“ While slowly, o’er the meadow lea,
And faintly from a far off shore,
The ocean-breath brings evermore
The Titan murmur of the sea.

“ Thus Nature, through all stress and strife,
Doth yield her diapason clear
And generous to the Poet’s ear,
Her sweetness to the Poet’s life.”

And thus assured my heart did fold
Itself to silence and to rest,
As bird-wings settle in the nest,
When all the sunset fades in gold.

Though Love was blind that summer day,
It lent all genius to my ear ;
For I—with steady pulse—could hear
A rapid step, a mile away ;

Through distant murmur, noise, and talk,
O'er all the bustle of the street,
One step, amid the thousand feet,
Struck music from the gravel walk.

And up the arcade, long and wide,
I heard it coming ; past the lines
Of heavy grape-empurpled vines,
Until it halted at my side.

And looking up—a darkness fell
Athwart my glory of an hour,
That fragile web of fancied power,
My simple heart had woven well.

For sudden, from the crimson pride
Of darkly shadowed lips, there came
Swift words that wrapt my heart in flame ;—
“ My love for thee is crucified.”

Oh fateful and exultant eyes,
In whose star-depths, I sought to trace
Some mild misgiving, to efface
The lightning stroke of my surprise !

But in their glory, I descried
No shadow of a hidden pain,
While low the proud lips spake again,
“ My love for thee is crucified.”

What darkness slipt athwart the gold
Of setting day, and fixed the bars
Of sunset, and the early stars
In shadows dense and manifold !

How strangely on the opal wave
Fell the swift darkness of his speech,
Changing the silver sanded beach
To the grim aspect of a grave.

With downward sweep, and open throat,
The night-hawk scattered in the grass
Harsh dissonance, that seemed to pass
Into the cricket's chirping note.

The insect chorus, from the ground,
Vibrated with discordant jar,
While slowly, from the twilight star
There came a wave of troubled sound,

That rolled upon the dark sea-tide,
Till every murmur of the main
Surged inward, with the stern refrain,
“ My love for thee is crucified.”

I questioned not my startled heart :
While through the gloom, my spirit wrought
A silver channel for her thought,
And silent—held herself apart.

Now, on a dim Plutonic throne
That Fate created in an hour,
Divested of all fancied power,
My soul—still regal—waits alone.

Alone—an unrelated thing—
Her clear thought burning on the dark,
And glowing like a deathless spark,
Blown from Love's fast retreating wing.

Would he reverse his sudden flight—
Love—the sweet arbiter of all,—
My heart, however low his call,
Would rise again in song and light,

And follow where no foot hath trod,
Beyond the rosy edge of day,
With all things chanting on its way,
“As God is Love, so Love is God.”

THE PROMISED KISS

Had he kissed me, my cheek would have brightened
And throbbed into opalline glow—
Ever more into opalline glow ;
Nor ever have softened with wasting,
Or fading again into snow ;
But constant through shadow and tears,
And ways that are darkened with fears,
Would have held that one kiss,—
That full moment of bliss—
An aurora through all coming years.

Oh a kiss from his lip had been largess
Of love that is tender and true,
And passion held sacred and true ;
For the influent, deathless God-nature
Refines his humanity through :
Love's commonest token and sign
Would have thrilled with a meaning divine ;
So a knowledge of loss
Shades the long years across ;—
The need of what should have been mine.

But his love, that is only earth-baffled,
Lives deathless and strong in his eyes,—
A glory, serening his eyes :
Affection's imperative triumphs,
Though Fate and her legions devise.
To our hearts that are seemingly riven,
The faith that o'er cometh is given ;
And this guerdon and goal
He has promised my soul,—
I'll kiss thee beloved in heaven.

So I drink that hope into my being,
And smile as I watch by the sea—
Calmly watch by Life's murmuring sea,
And sun in the light of the promise
Sent over the billows to me.
And the low narrow place looketh well,
Where blossoms the pale asphodel,
For the thought of the dead,
In my spirit is wed
Unto visions too precious to tell.

And I think that the cherubim holy,
With eyes that are dread to behold,—
Glassing God—and too dread to behold—
And seraphim flashing a rapture
Like glory of suns manifold,
And the myriad redeemed and forgiven
Will joy for the spirits world-riven,
In that moment of bliss,
When an earth-deferred kiss
Shall claim its fruition in heaven.

LOVE'S ALBUM

One day Love laid an album in my heart,
With leaves as spotless as a lily's cup,
Or as the first white snow that drops from heaven,
And has not caught as yet one stain of earth.
Oh I was glad to generosity
With the new gift ! I recked not to be choice,
But flung the pages open to the world,
Believing every hand that traced thereon,
Would leave a line of beauty on the sheet.
God pity me ! It is a volume now
Of torn and blotted leaves. Oh had I but
Another such a book, I'd shut so close
The purple covers, they would only ope
To let an angel's finger touch the page
And write the autographs of Heaven therein,
For Heaven alone is true.

HEART AZALEAS

Softly I slept in the green of my garden ;
Sweetly I dreamed of the coming of dawn ;
Innocence waited as watcher and warden,
Keeping the curtain of mystery drawn ;
But miracles came, with the pulse of the morning,
Into my being ;—I woke with a start ;
For the young tree of Love, without budding or
warning,
Had suddenly sprung into bloom in the heart.
Love's own azalea ! Crimson azalea !
Wonderful bloom in the green of the heart !

Such an aurora of halo resplendent,
Seemed to the world and the universe given !

Earth was enwrapt in a glory transcendent,
Close in the tender embraces of Heaven.
Oh I was brave in an ecstatic passion !
Ruler of Fate, and creator of Art !
For Love is the empress of law and of fashion,
When her red blossom unfolds in the heart.
Love's own azalea ! Crimson azalea !
Wonderful bloom in the green of the heart !

Yet while I exulted and laughed in the morning,
The beautiful blossom was touched with decay ;
Its death like its advent had come without warning,
And stolen the charm of existence away :
Oh there was loneliness, darkness and sorrow !
Faith lifted quickly her wing to depart !
Hope had no promise or lease of to-morrow,
When the red bloom had dropt out of my heart.
Love's own azalea,—Crimson azalea—
Blossoms but once in the green of the heart.

Then to the desolate places of spirit,
Toilers and helpers came in at my need ;
Over the furrows of scorn and demerit,
Angels were stooping to scatter the seed.
Oh it was joy, after waiting and praying,
To feel the faint pulse of the buried seed start !
And it was bliss worth the pain and delaying,
When a white bud opened out in my heart.
Love's white azalea ! Perfect azalea !
Slowly it grows into bloom in my heart.

Meanings that lurked in a subtle concealment,
Now to my purified vision are given ;
Life is an earnest and sacred revealment ;

Earth is the twilight that brightens to Heaven :
Duty is Beauty in saintlier whiteness ;
Truth is sublimer than Genius or Art ;
And the spectre of sorrow is crowned with a brightness

As pure as the blossom that grows in my heart—
Love's white azalea ! Perfect azalea !
Slowly it grows into bloom in my heart.

Such an Eternity opens before me—
Vision o'er-matching the pain and the cost !
While Hope ever whispers that Heaven will restore
me

The essence and soul of the blossom I lost ;—
Time cannot lessen, and doubt cannot smother
The hope that my blossoms will each form a part
Of the Heaven that is coming ;—the one and the
other,

To open for aye in the angelic heart.
Crimson azalea ! Snowy azalea !
Love has no loss in the angelic heart.

THE HIGHER UNITY

Oh we have stood on mystic altitudes
That dreamed not of the sunshine. He hath
touched
My spirit in that wondrous height of shade,
And walked with me through grand cathedral glooms
Of thought, transcending the factitious sense
Of time and space. Full softly, in our white,
We stept upon mosaic memories,
And on the ruin of a sweet, wild hope,
We planted, in the consecrated hush,
A flower that fades not in that upper air,
Although as frail and delicately fair
As ocean mosses in their deep sea beds.
And in that dome's wide eloquence of shade,
Full often have we stood with arms entwined,
With that transparent pallor on our brows,
The strong, self-conquering gods do ever wear.
One thought, one pulse, one eye, we gazed upon
The struggle and the tragedy of life.
Oh such incomparable spirit-unity,—
Though but for one brief moment, doth outweigh
The poor thin sunshine of a common life,
Its stinted path and low prudential aim.

RENUNCIATION

I will relinquish all ; yet to my life
He shall be real as the Sun to Day :
I may not serve as sister, friend, or wife,
Yet, wheresoe'er his line of life may lay,
I will exalt him with the strength of prayer,
And he will never know the whence or where.

And every eve when fall the shadows down,
And stars peep shyly through the twilight dim,
Arrayed again in Love's own lily gown,
I'll sit beside his chair and talk to him ;
And though to sight 'tis but an empty chair,
Yet I shall sense the halo resting there.

So gather peace, my Soul ! Thy brave intent
May vanquish Fate, if thou cans't hold it well ;
For love, that claimeth no equivalent,
Hath conquered Death, and passed the gates of
Hell.
Love's common code may hold thy gift in scorn,
Yet hast thou left the night, and found the
morn.

THE PYXIDANTHERA

Sweet child of April, I have found thy place
Of deep retirement. Where the low swamp ferns
Curl upward from their sheathes, and lichehs creep
Upon the fallen branch, and mosses dark
Deepen and brighten, where the ardent sun
Doth enter with restrained and chastened beam,
And the light cadence of the blue birds' song
Doth falter in the cedar,—there the Spring,
In gratitude hath wrought the sweet surprise
And marvel of thy unobtrusive bloom.

Most perfect symbol of my purest thought,—
A thought so close and warm within my heart
No words can shape its secret, and no prayer
Can breathe its sacredness—be thou my type,
And breathe to one who wanders here at dawn,
The deep devotion, which transcending speech,
Lights all the folded silence of my heart
As thy sweet beauty doth the shadow here.

So let thy clusters brighten, star on star
Of pink and white about his lingering feet,
Till, dreaming and enchanted, there shall pass
Into his life the story that my soul
Hath given thee. So shall his will be stirred
To purest purpose and divinest deed,
And every hour be touched with grace and light.

FAITHFUL BEYOND DEATH

O beautiful sun, sinking down in the west,
Shining low on the sycamore tree,
Draw all the dark mountains up over thy breast,
That my angel may come unto me,
Leave open a fold
Of the crimson and gold,
That my angel may come unto me.

And Night, blessed Night ! with the God-written
brow,
Spread softly thy Ethiope wing :
O dark brooding mother, thou knowest it—
thou—
What the love of an angel can bring
To a tired human soul,
To a famishing soul,
What the love of an angel can bring.

So light up the shadowy steeps of the skies ;
And the arches all fathomless, mark
With stars, that shall watch with their tremu-
lous eyes
For the angel that comes with the dark ;—
With throbings of light
Watch the magical flight
Of the angel that comes with the dark.

And wring the red life of thy poppies, O Sleep,
On my lids in a lethean stream,
Till a miracle comes to my soul, and I weep
With the ecstasy born of a dream ;
Till the desolate tomb

L. 12.

Of my heart is a-bloom
With the rapture and warmth of a dream.

He comes in my vision ! The pearl tinted light
Of a glory drops over my heart !
Not Earth with its blackness, nor Heaven with
its white,
Can hold us or keep us apart ; —
The height, the abyss,
Between that world and this
Cannot hold us or keep us apart.

And there is a courtesy, soft'ning his love,
That he learned of the seraphs, I know ;
For he leaveth his dread angel beauty above
When he stoopeth to me here below,
And human the face
That cometh to grace
And hallow my vision below.

Yet I fear, by the angelhood left in his eyes,
That erringly mortal I seem ;
But I rest in the gaze that is tender and wise,
For soul knoweth soul in my dream,
And our lips are not stirred
By the sound of a word,
For soul readeth soul in my dream.

And the clear, mellow depths of his eyes ever
show,
In their look of immeasurable love,
That much that is counted as frailty below,
Will blossom to virtue above,—
That our rootage in pain

Brings the fruitage of pain
To sweetness and beauty, above.

And though the red light of the morning will
come
Bringing back the old burden and strife,
And my spirit will struggle, though stricken
and dumb,
With the terrible meanings of life,—
Though my soul groweth gray
All the hours of the day
With the terrible lessons of life,—

Yet Night—brooding mother—will freshen my
heart,
However so withered it seem,
Till it pulses with Spring, and the green bud-
dings start
With a love that is warm in my dream :
And the logic of Day
Can not turn me away,
From trusting the truth of my dream.

ABSENCE

The angel of the Sunset spreads its wings,
Of softened splendor, o'er the crescent lake,
And glorifies the miracle of things,
For the tired spirit's sake.

Oh I am weary of all human pride,
Of ready love and praise too cheaply bought ;
I hunger for one accent deified
By Truth's courageous thought.

One spirit whose great heights and shadowed
deeps

Orb the rich ultimates of Nature's art,—
The rythm of the stars, the soul that sleeps
In the white lily's heart.

I know he waits for me, husband and King.

In the cool silence of this sunset hour,
He sits where purple fuchsia blossoms swing,
And honeysuckles flower,

And links the sweetness of responsive thought
To one unfolded dream of home and me,
While the strong quarry of his soul is wrought
By Truth's divinity.

Hasten thou creeping zephyr of the South,
Nor loiter by the lakelet's dimpled rim ;
Bring, in the whisperings of thy balmy mouth,
Sweet messages from him.

And Sunset-angel, let thy wings enfold
The dear horizon that he looks upon ;
Spread thy pure heaven of violet and gold
When day is nearly done ;

And leave him thy last kiss, for love's sweet sake,
When the cloud arches of the west grow dim,
And I will sit beside the crescent lake,
And weave bright dreams of him.

VICTORY

There's not a law, there's not an art,
In all the universe complete,
With ultimates that bring defeat
And failure to a loving heart.

Once, when a summer day was born,
I stood before the window pane,
And watched, across a daisied plain,
The grand maternity of Morn.

The sweetest plaint of early song !
The freshest birth of crimson bloom !
Yet, through the brightness stole a gloom,
For I was cognizant of wrong.

I heard the play of forest springs,
I saw the lakelets azure roll
Sweep landward—and my woman-soul
Grew conscious of her folded wings.

And while the earth was glad and free,
And glorious with bloom and song,
My heart was wild, with hunger strong,
For Nature's sweet divinity.

“ Oh not for woman,” I began,
“ Does Morning lift her golden shield
And smile across the daisied field,
For Nature's brightness is for man.

“ He walks with careless ease her sod,
Or day by day, with patient smite,
He bends her strength to human might,

And rules her forces like a god.

“ Till, in his spirit stature brave,
He claims a universal scope ;
But woman buries every hope,
And walks for life around a grave.”

Then, darkly, where the mulberries part,
A slowly moving shadow fell,
Of him who loves me wise and well,
And holds me in his honest heart.

And looking in his earnest eyes,
Straightway my soul forgot to moan ;
My higher nature took the throne,
And claimed the crown of sacrifice.

And said, in self-forgetful plea,
“ I’ll make the narrow place that’s given
The very vestibule of heaven,
Because of him who loveth me.”

And then, (Oh wondrous to rehearse!)
The humble walls began to rise,
And towering upward to the skies,
They widened to the universe.

And Nature’s wealth came in to me ;
The beautiful in sight and sound
Flowed my exalted being round,
As trophies of a victory.

Oh grand achievement over fate !
Oh woman soul, least understood,

Thou holdest all of human good,
In thy affection's ultimate.

For wheresoe'er the path may be,
However narrow, low, or small,
Love's patient work will conquer all,
And carve the steps of victory.

1

THINE

~~223753
2/20
first lesson~~

I know—Beloved—thou dost often seek,
(Wondering and doubting), for the secret chain
That links my life to thine. And when I seem
Drawn by the perishable chords of sense,
By beauty, and the silver tongue of praise,
With all its pleasure-pain, thy faith is small.
But well I know these wanderings are of time—
Mortal phenomena of earthly life—
The transient outcome of my poorer self.
For when with thee, I find the eternal calm
And infinite richness of the central soul,
And harmony ensphering consciousness
As ether does a star. So in the years
Of God's eternity, my calyx life
Shall open into lily opulence,
Rooted in thee.

A CONCLUSION

When Love is young, he has no eyes :
Yet, with a reckless wing he soars,
Till, faltering in untoward skies,
His heart a piteous plaint outpours :—
When Love is young.

When Love is old, he finds his eyes,
Nor cares a daring wing to spread
For random flight through changeful skies,
But simply walks with level head :—
When Love is old.

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